

48 Henry Street (Row House)
New York City
New York

HABS No. NY-6065

HABS
NY

31-NEWO,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

48 HENRY STREET (Row House)

HABS No. NY-6065

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Location: 48 Henry Street, New York City, New York. (NYC Block 33, Lot 277.)

Present Owner: Trinity Church, 74 Trinity Place, New York City, New York.

Present Occupant: Trinity Church.

Present Use: Settlement House.

Significance: A Federal style row house typical of those built in New York City in the early nineteenth century, which retains much of its interior ornament.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1832.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Surrogate Court Building, Room 204.

1795-6 Deed February 18, 1795-6, recorded in Liber 51, page 102.
Obadiah Bowen
To
William Boyd

1824 Deed June 30, 1824, recorded in Liber 179, page 68.
Ann Bancker, widow of William Bancker, Henry Rutgers, Stephen and Mary McCrea
To
Catherine Bedlow

1831 Deed May 12, 1831, recorded in Liber 272, page 28.
Cornelius Bogert, Peter Stagg, William Ireland
(Commissioners in partition)
To
John R. Willis

1831 Deed June 1, 1831, recorded in Liber 275, page 310.
Martha, William, James, and Jane Boyd, widow and heirs of William Boyd, Martha Boyd, William W. and John T. Boyd, trustees of the will of William Boyd
To
John R. Willis

- 1841 Deed May 3, 1841, recorded in Liber 416, page 151.
John R. and Elizabeth W. Willis
To
Abraham B. Sands
- 1851 Deed April 26, 1851, recorded in Liber 569, page 473.
Abraham B. and Sarah A. Sands
To
John McNally
- 1861 Deed November 25, 1861, recorded in Liber 847,
page 365.
Joseph M. Manin (referee), John McNally et al.
(defendants)
To
George Ricardo
- 1862 Deed January 15, 1862 recorded in Liber 850, page 187.
John and Sarah McNally
To
George Ricardo
- 1862 Deed January 15, 1862, recorded in Liber 850, page 187.
George and Eliza Ann Ricardo
To
Timonthy Coleman
- 1867 Deed April 18, 1867, recorded in Liber 1057, page 174.
Timothy and Julia Coleman
To
James Boyd
- 1890 Deed October 14, 1890, recorded in Liber 3365, page 2.
John and Mary E. Boyd
To
Alexander Boyd
- 1903 Deed October 27, 1903, recorded in Liber 82, page 21.
John Boyd, exr. and trustee, James Boyd, trustee
To
Alexander Boyd
- 1903 Deed October 27, 1903, recorded in Liber 82, page 19.
Alexander and Margaret P. Boyd
To
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
- 1952 Deed April 24, 1952, recorded in Liber 4778, page 316.
Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
To
The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of Trinity
Church, 74 Trinity Place, NYC

4. Alterations and additions:

- April 24, 1906 See Appendix CC for reproduction of Permits for this major renovation.
- February 25, 1918 Alteration Application - #48-50 Henry Street
Architect - Elisha Janes: Owner - Mary Riis
Proposed Alterations - "Enclose cellar stairs with fire resisting material. Build exterior stairs from extension roof to yard with entrances from balcony and ground floor as per Exit Order #495/1917. Original plans filed in May 1906."
- June 9, 1939 Alteration Application - #48-50 Henry Street
Architect - John Moore: Owner - Jacob Riis Settlement. Proposed Alterations - "Cutting opening in party wall between this building and #46 Henry Street, (owned by same owner), installing fire doors as required..."
- November 16, 1944 Alteration Application - #48-50 Henry Street
Architect - John Moore: Owner - Jacob Riis Settlement. Proposed Alteration - "Install new w.c. compartment with lavatory partitioned off kitchen and adjacent to second floor hall, with vent duct through the third floor and roof."
- 1952 Alteration Application - #48-50 Henry Street
Architect - Thomas Bell: Owner - Trinity Church. Proposed Alteration - "Replace present wood stair to second floor with new steel stair. New steel fire escape stairs to roof. New sink and piscina on first floor..."
- June 26, 1956 Alteration Application - #48-50 Henry Street
Architect - Thomas Bell: Owner - Trinity Church. Proposed Alteration - "Create new opening between gym and store room in basement..."

For photocopies of this documentation see Appendix A, Field Records for this site.

- B. Historic Context: Henry Street was part of the farm of Hermanus Rutgers. The street was divided into lots in 1784 by Rutgers' grandchildren. The lots were standard New York City lots measuring 25' x 100.' Number 48 remained in the Rutgers family until 1831, when John Willis purchased the property.

John Willis and his brothers owned a hardware store on Pearl Street. In the 1830's, all of the brothers - Alfred, John, Edward, and William - lived on Henry Street, in numbers 40, 42, 48, and 54. John Willis was well-off. Tax Assessment records show his "personal estate" to be \$20,000. His brother William, who lived with him, was worth between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

The house now standing at #48 Henry Street was probably built in 1832, shortly after John Willis bought the lot. It was a Federal row house of brick bearing walls in a Flemish bond pattern, on a rectangular plan, three bays wide with a side hall. The house measured 25' x 44' and would have originally been two stories high with a peaked roof. Exterior ornament was minimal and the door and windows did not project outside the plane of the facade.

Abraham Sand bought the house from John Willis in 1840. Abraham Sand had a drugstore on Fulton Street, and two branch stores which opened before 1850. By the early 1900's #48 Henry Street was serving as a Settlement House, helping the poor in that neighborhood. In 1903 the Boyd family, who owned #48 and #50 donated the houses to the Jacob Riis Neighborhood Settlement. Numbers 48 and 50 were joined together. The doorway of #50 became a bay window. The peaked roof was flattened and a metal balustrade extended over the two buildings. A one-story addition was built behind the house. Despite these alterations, the house has retained its basic plan and decoration elements.

For tax assessments on this site from 1830 see Appendix B. Field Records for this site.

For a list of occupants of the house see Appendix C, Field Records for this site.

Edited by: Eleni Silverman
Historian HABS
March 10, 1984

Prepared by: Mary Dierickx
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The three story row house is actually two identical nineteenth century townhouses thrown into one. Each was three bays wide and measured 25' x 44'.
2. Foundations: The foundations are 24' thick stone walls, 14' below curb level.

3. Wall construction: The walls are brick, loadbearing walls in Flemish bond with brownstone facing on the basement level of the main facade.
4. Porches: There is a brownstone stoop at the front entrance of #48.
5. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys.
7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is the original doorway to #48 (left end bay). Ionic pilasters and half-pilasters with entablature frame the entrance to the vestibule. Oval windows set into a carved wooden decorative motif between the pilasters form the sidelights. A similar set of windows forms a transom above the entablature.

The inner doorway is also set with a decorative wooden architrave trim. There are small square sidelights.

There are two rear doorways on the second floor which lead out to the roof of the rear addition.

- b. Windows: Typical windows are double-hung wood sash, with six-lights-over-six lights. The windows on the third floor are double-hung wood sash with four-lights-over-four-lights. There were originally two windows on the first floor of each house; the original entrance door to #50 was connected to a bay window in 1903.

There are three windows on the second and third floors of each house.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: In 1903 the original roof was altered into a flat roof built of asphalt and gravel.
- b. Cornice: A white metal balustrade runs the length of the houses. A dentiled cornice extends beneath the balustrade.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Cellar: The cellar has been extensively altered. It has a side hall, lavatory and showers in the front and large room behind and a storeroom in the rear.

- b. First floor: The first floor has a side hall with staircase at the rear. There is a double parlor separated by hinged 8-panel doors. The doors are framed by pilasters supporting an entablature with carved central block. When they are opened the doors fold into the side closets, providing a panelled passage between the two rooms.
 - c. Second floor: A side hall with one large front room, and two smaller bedrooms.
 - d. Third floor: A side hall with stairs leading to the roof, a rear bedroom, and three rooms off the side hall.
- 2. Stairways: Fireproof stairs running from the cellar to the third floor were installed in 1952.
 - 3. Flooring: Wood now covered with linoleum.
 - 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster with wooden baseboards, chair rail and cornice.
 - 5. Decorative features: The doorways and windows are framed by pilasters supporting horizontal lintels with square corner blocks carved with acanthus leaves.

Parlor fireplaces have marbelized slate columns and lintels. The front parlor of #48 has the original coal grating.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary sources:

Archives, Tax Assessment Records, 23 Park Row, New York, New York.

Bureau of Buildings Docket, Room 2017, Municipal Building, New York.

Conveyances, Hall of Records, Room 204, Surrogates Court, New York.

B. Published sources:

Longnorth's New York City Directory 1829-84, Avery Library, Columbia University, New York.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This material was recorded by Mary Dierickx of Columbia University, New York, in the Fall of 1973, and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by Eleni Silverman, Architectural Historian, HABS, WASO office, in May of 1984.